

### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all previous versions, and listing, of claims in this application.

5

Claims 1-30 (Cancelled).

31. (Currently Amended) A data communications connection method for the Transmission  
10 Control Protocol (TCP) comprising the steps of:
- prior to the ~~establishment of~~transmission of a handshake packet for a TCP/IP connection,  
an initiating party computer system sending a connection request message to a receiving party  
computer system;
  - receiving the connection request message at the receiving party computer system;
  - 15 transmitting a handshake packet for a TCP/IP connection from the initiating party  
computer to the receiving party computer;
  - opening, upon receipt of the connection request message and the handshake packet, a  
TCP connection at the receiving party computer system for the initiating party computer  
system[[,]] ; and[[,]]
  - 20 communicating between the initiating and receiving party computer systems using TCP  
communication packets.

32. (Previously Presented) A data communications connection method according to claim 31,  
wherein the connection request message includes data on the connection requested.

25

33. (Previously Presented) A data communications connection method according to claim 31,  
wherein the connection request message includes information on the initiating party computer  
system.

- 30 34. (Previously Presented) A data communications connection method according to claim 31,  
further comprising:

evaluating the connection request message at the receiving party computer system prior to opening the TCP connection.

35. (Previously Presented) A data communications connection method according to claim 34,  
5 wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating data within the connection request message.

36. (Previously Presented) A data communications connection method according to claim 34,  
10 wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating the initiating party computer system.

37. (Previously Presented) A data communications connection method according to claim 34,  
further comprising negotiating an encryption key during evaluation.

15 Claim 38 – 43 (Cancelled).

44. (Currently Amended) A communication connection system adapted to communicate under the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP), comprising:

20 an initiating device adapted to send a connection request message prior to the transmission of a handshake packet for establishment of a TCP/IP connection and the subsequent transmission of the handshake packet for a TCP/IP connection; and

a receiving device adapted to receive the connection request message and subsequent handshake packet, open a TCP connection at the receiving device for the initiating device[[,]] upon receipt of the connection request message and the subsequent handshake packet, and

25 communicate with the initiating device using TCP communication packets.

45. (Previously Presented) The communication connection system of claim 44, wherein the connection request message includes information on the initiating device.

46. (Previously Presented) The communication connection system of claim 44, wherein the receiving device is further adapted to evaluate the connection request message prior to opening the TCP connection at the receiving device for the initiating device.

5 47. (Previously Presented) The communication system of claim 46, wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating data within the connection request message.

48. (Previously Presented) The communication connection system of claim 46, wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating the initiating device.

10 49. (Previously Presented) The communication connection system of claim 46, wherein the receiving device is further adapted to negotiate an encryption key with the initiating device.

15 50. (Currently Amended) A communication connection system adapted to communicate under the a Transmission Control Protocol (TCP), comprising:

an initiating device adapted to send a connection request message prior to the transmission of a handshake packet for establishment of a TCP/IP connection, the connection request message comprising an IP datagram;

20 a receiving device adapted to receive the connection request message, open a TCP connection at the receiving device for the initiating device upon receipt of the connection request message, and communicate with the initiating device using TCP communication packets.

51. (Previously Presented) The communication connection system of claim 50, wherein the connection request message includes information on the initiating device.

25 52. (Previously Presented) The communication connection system of claim 50, wherein the receiving device is further adapted to evaluate the connection request message prior to opening the TCP connection at the receiving device for the initiating device.

53. (Previously Presented) The communication connection system of claim 52, wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating data within the connection request message.

5 54. (Previously Presented) The communication connection system of claim 52, wherein evaluating the connection request message includes authenticating the initiating device.

55. (Previously Presented) The communication connection system of claim 52, wherein the receiving device is further adapted to negotiate an encryption key with the initiating device.

10

56. (New) The data communications connection method according to claim 31, wherein the request message is an IP datagram.

15 57. (New) The communication connection system of claim 44, wherein the request message is an IP datagram.

58. (New) The data communications connection method according to claim 31, wherein the opening step is performed only upon receipt of the connection request message and the subsequent handshake packet.

20

59. (New) The data communications connection method according to claim 58, wherein the request message is an IP datagram.

60. (New) The communication connection system of claim 44, wherein the receiving device is adapted to open the TCP/IP connection only upon receipt of the connection request message and the subsequent handshake packet.

- 5 61. (New) The communication connection system of claim 50, wherein the receiving device is adapted to open the TCP/IP connection only upon receipt of the connection request message.